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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 9, 1956.

To: State Conservationists, SCS
From: D. A. Williams, Administrator, SCS
Subject: Watershed Protection (Pilot)

As we approach the end of the third year of operations on the Watershed Protection (Pilot) projects, it is evident that an adequate inspection of each project is needed to determine whether it fulfills the objectives for which this program was established. We have reached the point where definite facts and recommendations are required to guide forthcoming decisions on:

1. Need for extending the project installation period.
2. Increasing or decreasing the present project fund ceiling.
3. Expanding or curtailing the scope of the project.
4. Discontinuing the project if it appears unlikely to fulfill the objective of a suitable demonstration of watershed protection and flood prevention.

Some of the States have recently made inspections and others have scheduled early inspections of the pilot watersheds. Where inspections have not been made within the past six months they should be scheduled before June 15. If the last inspections did not provide sufficient information to permit conclusive recommendations on the above points, a new one should be made.

If you have any doubts concerning recommendations that should be made on the above points, we will be glad to arrange for participation in an inspection by the Engineering and Watershed Planning Unit and a Washington-Field Plant Technologist, or a Washington resident staff member if you consider this especially important.

We are attaching for your guidance in making your recommendations an outline of some of the pertinent factors that should be considered in the watershed inspections. Your report and recommendations to me should contain a brief discussion of the pros and cons of each item with respect to how it influences your recommendations. If the item is not pertinent, please indicate this fact.

Attachment

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- 2/ Do the local people have the interest and/or ability to provide their share of the local funds?
3. Are farmers ready and willing to utilize all of the accelerated technical assistance provided in the work plan for farm planning and establishment of conservation measures?

C. Expanding or Curtailing the Scope of the Project

If the recommendation is to expand the scope of the project, consider the following:

1. Is the expansion required to provide a satisfactory demonstration of watershed protection and flood prevention?
2. Are the local people demanding the additional works of improvement and agreeing to participate financially in the expanded program?

If the recommendation is to curtail the scope of the project, consider the following:

1. Is the proposed reduction in scope of project due to the local people being unwilling and/or unable to meet their obligations?
2. Will the reduction in scope of the approved project still provide a suitable demonstration of watershed protection and flood prevention?

D. Discontinuing the Project if it appears unlikely to fulfill the objectives of a suitable demonstration of Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention

The land-treatment measures and structural works of improvement as shown in the work plan were considered as being those necessary to provide a suitable demonstration. If it does not now appear feasible, even with a revised fund ceiling and scope of project, to substantially complete the project, even with a reasonable extension of time, the recommendation should be for discontinuing the project as soon as possible. In this case, give your best estimate as to when this can be done and what will be the reaction of the local people to discontinuing the project.

If the project period is extended, should the evaluation program period also be extended in order to accomplish the objectives as stated in the Evaluation Supplement of the project work plan? If so, how much will it cost?

OUTLINE FOR INSPECTION OF WATERSHED PROTECTION (PILOT) PROJECTS

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A. Need for Extending the Project Installation Period

Will all of the measures that have a material effect on the project objectives be installed by 1958? If not, by what date? Give consideration to the following:

1. How does the actual rate of installation of measures compare with the schedule (Table 1)?
2. Is the education and information program of the local organization adequate to provide the needed understanding and incentive to sufficiently accelerate the "B" measure program to complete it by 1958 - if not, to what extent?
3. Will land, easements, and rights-of-way be available when needed?
4. Will it be necessary to delay installation of structural works of improvement until the required "B" measures are installed above the structures?
5. Are there adequate personnel and facilities available to keep surveys, designs, specifications and contracts on schedule?
6. Will local commitments such as; money, services, materials and operation and maintenance be available as scheduled? If not, what changes are needed in the scheduled rate of installation to conform with the local organizations ability to meet their obligations?

B. Increasing or Decreasing the present Project Fund Ceiling.

If an increase is proposed, consider the following:

1. What is the approximate difference between the estimated and actual cost for installation of major works of improvement so far constructed or contracted for?
2. Are the expenditures of the local people also exceeding the estimates?
3. Will an increase in technical assistance for "B" measures actually accelerate the establishment of conservation practices?
4. To what extent is the increase in project cost due (1) to expanding the scope of the project in order to provide a better demonstration of watershed protection and flood prevention (2) to change in design standards (3) to increasing bids and general construction cost level?

Is a decrease warranted? If so, give consideration to the following:

1. Can items requiring substantial Federal expenditures be eliminated from the approved project without impairing its demonstrational value?

